

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 20037 021530Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----033319 021739Z /47

P 021519Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2322
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 20037

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR EG IS
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI DIALOGUE

1. IN LONG TALK WITH ACTING FONMIN BOUTROS GHALI TODAY, HE CONFIDED SOME OF HIS CONCERNS ABOUT ISRAELI INTENTIONS AT UPCOMING CAIRO PREPARATORY CONFERENCE. HE WAS ESPECIALLY WORRIED THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL TRY TO PUSH FOR A BILATERAL EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI AGREEMENT.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE RECALLED THAT DAYAN HAD DURING THE ENTIRE TRIP FROM BEN GURION AIRPORT TO JERUSALEM AND BACK URGED THAT GOE CONCLUDE BILATERAL AGREEMENT. DAYAN HAD ARGUED THAT IT WAS IN GOE'S INTERESTS TO DO SO AND THAT THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL WHICH COULD NOT BE RESOLVED TO THEIR MUTUAL SATISFACTION. GHALI HAD BEATEN OFF THESE OVERTURES, NOTING GOE'S LEADERSHIP POSITION IN ARAB WORLD
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WOULD BE PERMANENTLY LOST IF EGYPT GOES IT ALONE. EGYPT WOULD ALSO SUFFER ECONOMICALLY IN THAT SAUDIS AND OTHER GULF STATES WOULD STOP PROVIDING BADLY NEEDED FUNDS. FINALLY, EGYPTIANS WORKING IN OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES WOULD BE EXPELLED. EGYPT COULD NOT ABSORB A HALF-MILLION OR MORE TRAINED EGYPTIANS IN ITS OWN ECONOMY, THEY COULD READILY BE REPLACED IN OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES BY ASIANS

OR EUROPEANS, AND BADLY NEEDED REMITTANCES FROM ABROAD WOULD BE SHARPLY REDUCED. DAYAN HAD REMAINED UNCONVINCED. GHALI HAD JUST HEARD FROM FRG SOURCES THAT DAYAN HAD ALSO GIVEN IMPRESSION IN BONN THAT ISRAELIS INTEND TO PRESS FOR A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT.

3. AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD ME, GHALI IS AGAINST ANY SUCH BILATERAL SETTLEMENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED IT MIGHT BE A SHORT-TERM SUCCESS, BUT WAS CONVINCED THAT ITS LONG-TERM EFFECTS WOULD BE HARMFUL TO EGYPT. APART FROM ISRAELI DESIRE, HE EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN THAT THE PREVAILING PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN EGYPT TODAY FAVORS A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT IF MULTILATERAL EFFORTS FAIL. SYRIAN, LIBYAN, IRAQI AND PALESTINIAN ATTACKS HAVE AROUSED THE IRE OF THE EGYPTIAN MASSES, WHO ARE PREPARED TO JETTISON THE OTHER ARABS. SOME WAY HAD TO BE FOUND, GHALI SAID, TO PREVENT ISRAELI INTENTIONS AND CURRENT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC ATTITUDES FROM COLLUDING TO ACHIEVE BILATERAL SETTLEMENT.

4. I TOLD HIM WE SHARE THE VIEW THAT A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT WOULD BE WRONG. WE HAD URGED BOTH PRESIDENT SADAT AND THE ISRAELIS TO WORK FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND BOTH HAD ASSURED US OF THEIR DESIRE TO DO SO. GHALI INTERJECTED WRYLY THAT ISRAELIS MAY SAY SO TO US, BUT DAYAN AND HIS COLLEAGUES TOOK A DIFFERENT LINE IN TALKS WITH EGYPTIANS. HE EXPECTS THAT THE ISRAELI DELEGATION

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WILL DO THE SAME AT THE CAIRO CONFERENCE. GHALI HOPED HE COULD COUNT UPON U.S. DEL TO HELP PARRY SUCH ISRAELI EFFORTS AND REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE RATHER THAN A BILATERAL SETTLEMENT. I ASSURED HIM THIS ALSO REMAINS OUR VIEW. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, PEACE TALKS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977CAIRO20037
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770447-1108
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712101/aaaadial.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7fdcceb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 106822
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI DIALOGUE
TAGS: MARR, EG, IS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7fdcceb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009